

## REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The claims, upon entry of the above amendment, will be 1 to 8.

With regard to the above amendment to claim 1:

The term "solution" is supported by the disclosure on page 15, Table 1 of the present specification.

The definition of the hardness is supported by the disclosure on page 9, lines 9-18 of the present specification.

New claim 7 is supported by page 8, lines 14 to 20 of the present specification.

New claim 8 is supported by the disclosure of page 10, line 17 to page 12, line 9 of the present specification.

The significance of the above amendment will be discussed below.

The amendment to claim 1 is clearly responsive to the 35 USC § 112 rejection.

Claims 1 and 3-6 have been rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ando et al. (US 5,501,491) in view of Nagao (JP 2001-157545) as evidenced by Alzamora.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The presently claimed method relates to foods. On the other hand, Ando relates to molded articles. The technical field of Ando is thus very different from that of the present method.

In addition, in the present method, "plasticity" means such a physical property that a mixture has appropriate consistency and smooth texture, and can be uniformly mixed with raw materials which are generally used in wheat dough raw materials (page 9, lines 7-15 of the specification).

Ando describes molded articles. Molded articles have neither appropriate consistency nor smooth texture. And, molded articles cannot be uniformly mixed with wheat dough raw material.

In addition, Ando uses the word "plastic" as "synthetic organic solids" as will be appreciated from the description of column 1, lines 9-17. Thus, Ando neither teach nor suggest "plastic mixture" of the present method.

To clarify this point, the hardness of the plastic mixture is defined in claim 1. Both Ando and Nagao neither teach nor suggest 0.1 cm<sup>2</sup> to 49 cm<sup>2</sup>/0.785cm<sup>2</sup> of the hardness of the plastic mixture. Therefore, even if Ando and Nagao were combined, a skilled person in the art could not arrive at the present method.

In addition, it is important that plasticity of dough be stable at a stage of confectionery production (page 1, lines 23-24 of the specification). However, dough using soybean protein undergoes influence of strong water absorption properties of soybean protein, and hardness of the dough is increased with time, thereby deteriorating workability.

Since it is difficult to reduce this change in plasticity of the dough, the amount of soybean protein to be used should be restricted, and there has been a demand to avoid this (page 2, lines 12-19 of the specification).

On that basis, an object of the present method is to provide a process for producing soybean protein-containing wheat dough which hardly undergoes influence of strong water absorption properties of soybean protein even in dough using soybean protein and has less change in hardness of the dough with time and good workability (page 4, lines 5-10 of the specification).

To solve the above problem, the present inventors have conducted studies, and found that, by preliminarily preparing a plastic mixture of soybean protein with a sugar in the form of liquid i.e. a sugar solution, in the production of soybean protein-containing wheat dough, the soybean protein constituent absorbs water from the sugar solution, and the soybean protein gradually firms up to alleviate strong water absorption properties of the soybean protein (page 4, lines 12-20 of the specification).

Thus, it is an important point of the present invention to preliminarily prepare a plastic mixture of soybean protein with a sugar solution and then add the mixture to wheat flour.

The rejection points out that Ando describes that the biodegradable molded article can also include wheat powder, etc. However, Ando does not disclose preliminarily preparing a plastic mixture of soybean protein with a sugar solution.

In addition, Nagao only discloses preparing a mixture of powders.

Therefore, both Ando and Nagao neither teach nor suggest preliminarily preparing a plastic mixture of soybean protein with a sugar solution.

As above mentioned, the present claims are unobvious from Ando and Nagao.

Alzamora, which was only applied against claim 3, fails to overcome the above-discussed deficiencies of Ando and Nagao.

Accordingly, the rejection on prior art is untenable and should be withdrawn.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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